

PLANNING

Cairngorms National Park

Local Development Plan 2020

Non-statutory guidance: Policy 8 Open Space, Sport
and Recreation



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How to use this guidance

This non-statutory guidance supports the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan 2020 and applies to all planning applications within the Cairngorms National Park. The Local Development Plan is available via <https://cairngorms.co.uk/planning-development/local-development-plan-2020/> and should be read alongside this guidance.

This guidance should be used during the preparation and assessment of planning applications, to identify measures to safeguard and /or enhance open space, sport & recreation assets.

Introduction and context

Policy 8 of the Local Development Plan¹ provides the framework for consideration of how development would support the provision of quality open spaces, sport & recreation facilities.

¹ Note, policy wording may change following the examination of the Proposed Plan.

Proposals will be assessed against all relevant policies in the Local Development Plan however other policies that may in particular apply are those for Natural Heritage, Landscape and Design & Placemaking.

Policy 8 – Open Space, Sport and Recreation

8.1 New development

Developments of sport and recreation facilities, diversification of, or extensions to existing sport and recreation related business activities, or the enhancement of the quality and design of existing facilities will be supported where:

- a) they demonstrate best practice in terms of sustainable design, operation and future maintenance, and where there are no adverse environmental impacts on the site or neighbouring areas; and
- b) they will meet an identified community or visitor need; and
- c) they maintain and maximise all opportunities to link into the existing path network.

8.2 Redevelopment of outdoor sports facilities

Outdoor sports facilities such as playing fields and outdoor pitches should not be redeveloped except where:

- a) the proposed development is ancillary to the principal use of the site as an outdoor sports facility; or
- b) the proposed development involves a minor part of the facility which would not affect its use and potential for sport and training; or
- c) the facility which would be lost would be replaced by a new facility of comparable or greater benefit for sport and in a location which is convenient for its users, or by the upgrading of an existing facility in the area; or
- d) a strategy prepared in consultation with SportScotland has demonstrated that there is a clear excess of provision to meet current and anticipated future demand in the area, and that the site could be developed without detriment to the overall quality of provision.

8.3 Redevelopment of other open space

Developments which would result in the loss or reduction of other open spaces or recreation facilities will only be supported where:

- a) the development is ancillary to the principal use of the site as an open space or recreation facility; and
- b) the development would not affect the use of the site as an open space or recreation facility; and
- c) in the reduction of public access rights, or loss of the existing path network including loss of access to inland water, an appropriate or improved alternative access solution can be secured; and
- d) a compensatory site of at least equal size and quality is created which is convenient to users, or an existing facility is upgraded to maintain and improve the overall capacity in the area; or
- e) an audit demonstrates the development will not result in the loss of provision of services used by the affected community and that no alternative site is available.

Sections 8.2 and 8.3 of this policy will be particularly applicable to the sites that are identified as protected open spaces within the Community Information section of the Plan. There will be a presumption against other forms of development on these sites unless the above criteria are satisfied.

Policy 8 aims to support & enable opportunities for local residents & visitors to *'live more active, engaged, independent and healthy lifestyles'* in line with the Scottish Planning Policy principle of *'improving health and well-being by offering opportunities for social interaction and physical activity, including sport and recreation'*²

The Cairngorms National Park offers outstanding opportunities for recreation & this policy aims to enable the development of new facilities & protect existing provision of open space, sports & recreation facilities. The policy recognizes that these facilities can offer benefits including the support of:

- social opportunities
- healthy recreation & well-being for all age groups
- active travel
- placemaking
- green networks & biodiversity
- allotments
- Community Growing Spaces

² Scottish Planning Policy (2014)
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-planning-policy/pages/2/>

All Open Space, Sport and Recreation proposals

Submitted information should demonstrate how your proposals would impact on recreation opportunities for local communities & for visitors. Any impacts on residential amenity & the core path network should also be specified.

Developments that extend the tourist season & support a year round economy are encouraged & any relevant information should be included in your submission.

New facilities

New or significantly enhanced / extended facilities should submit a Visitor Management Plan in support of your planning application. The level of detail provided in this Plan should be appropriate to the scale of the proposed development. As a minimum, where relevant, it should include information on the following:

- how the proposal has been designed to extend the tourist season; and
- how the proposal will improve the availability of facilities for local communities; and
- what arrangements have been put in place for the long-term maintenance of the completed development.

Depending on the scale of the proposed development, contributions may be required by the planning authority to ensure sufficient protection of sport and recreation. Information may also be required on other infrastructure needed to support the proposed development i.e.:

- access to and/or within the proposed development site (including non-car modes);
- proposed parking arrangements;
- signage to and within the proposed development site; and

- additional facilities such as toilets, reception and storage facilities.

All new development should also be designed and located to ensure that existing and potential public access routes are protected, and to utilise appropriate opportunities to promote walking and cycling as a means of transport to/from/within the development site.

In addition, all new developments should maximise opportunities to secure and retain outdoor access, including public access rights, proposed and adopted core paths, wider path networks, rights of way and other public open spaces. All new developments should contribute to enhancing and improving this infrastructure by ensuring that new development proposals do not result in a loss of existing public open space provision; making new physical links to existing paths and open spaces; and putting in place management schemes to ensure these new elements are cared for in the future.

Redevelopment of outdoor sports facilities

If your proposal seeks to re-develop an entire sports facility, field or pitch, it must be demonstrated that there is an over-supply of recreational or sporting facilities of this nature within the surrounding area. A strategy prepared in consultation with SportScotland will be required to evidence this.

It may also be acceptable to re-develop an entire sporting facility where it will be replaced – either on site or on a more suitable site – with a sporting facility of equal or greater benefit, standard and capacity. Ensuring the provision of sporting facilities is a priority.

The partial re-development of a facility, field or pitch will only be acceptable where it is ancillary to the existing use of the sports facility or the proposal involves the re-development of a minor part which will not affect the overall function or potential use of the facility for sport.

Details of any extended or replacement facilities should include arrangements for their sustainable construction and future maintenance.

Redevelopment of other open space

Recreation facilities play an important role across the National Park in supporting local communities and the wider economy. The way in which key facilities and more informal access routes embed communities in the wider landscape is key to their success and should therefore be protected.

If your proposal suggests a reduction in the facilities which exist you must justify why its loss will not result in an adverse effect on the local community. Where you propose a reuse of the site you must include an assessment of alternative sites you have considered and discounted.

Where such justification is not available, proposals to reduce existing facilities will only be supported where the facility is ancillary to the main use of the site and

where the removal of the facility will not adversely impact the principle use.

To ensure that the overall range of facilities is not undermined, you must provide an alternative provision of at least equal size and quality, or upgrade the principle facility on the site to maintain the provision as a whole. Details of any extended or replacement facilities should include arrangements for their sustainable construction and future maintenance.

Where your proposal has an adverse impact on the public path network or public access rights, you must provide appropriate replacement alternative access, so there is no loss of access & the overall path network is maintained. In considering how best to achieve this you should consult the Core Paths Plan which sets out the principle paths across the National Park.

Useful sources of advice and information

Cairngorms Core Paths Plan available via [https://cairngorms.co.uk/working-](https://cairngorms.co.uk/working-together/authority/national-park-strategies/core-paths-plan/)

[together/authority/national-park-strategies/core-paths-plan/](https://cairngorms.co.uk/working-together/authority/national-park-strategies/core-paths-plan/)

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This document is available in large print on request. Please contact the Cairngorms National Park Authority on 01479 873535. It is also available to view at www.cairngorms.co.uk

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Cairngorms National Park Authority
14 The Square
Grantown-on-Spey PH26 3HG

Email: planning@cairngorms.co.uk
Tel: 01479 873535
Fax: 01479 873527

www.cairngorms.co.uk

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